

# JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

Chairman :

Tsunetaro Miyakoda

Editors:

Kaname Tsukahara

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## MODERATOR MUTO RETURNS

The Reverend Takeshi Muto, Moderator of the United Church, returned on July 6 from a three month's visit to the United States. In addition to formal conference he conferred with mission board leaders in the New York headquarters where he was pleased with their understanding of the United Church, their deep interest in evangelism and the Church's plan for financial independence, and their willingness to help in the Okinawa problem, and interest in strengthening the Asia Council on Ecumenical Mission.

## DR. KOZAKI GOES ABROAD

The Reverend Michio Kozaki, chairman of the National Christian Council, departed for Europe and America on July 12. In London he will attend a meeting of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Christian Education, July 16-18, and discuss matters relating to the World Sunday School Convention in 1958. In Budapest, Hungary, from July 28 - August 5 at a meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches he will present the National Christian Council's position relative to the Okinawa land problem. On August 8 - 12 he will attend a Protestant convention in Frankfurt, Germany. From Europe, Dr. Kozaki will go to the United States where he will represent Japan at the Annual Conference of the Evangelical and

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## In These Days

Editorial Note: In these days of rapid change and uncertainty, it is often difficult to find a common ground. However, we believe that there are certain principles that should guide us in our actions. These principles are based on the teachings of the Bible and the example of Jesus Christ. We hope that this article will provide some food for thought and encourage us to live more fully in accordance with these principles.

## WILLIAM AND CATHERINE

The Reverend William and Catherine, members of the United Church, returned to Japan in 1951 after a year's visit to the United States. During their stay, they were deeply impressed by the Christian life in America and the love and hospitality of the American people. They are now working to bring the same love and hospitality to the Japanese people.

## THE JAPANESE CHURCH

The Japanese Church is a young and growing church. It has many challenges ahead of it, but it also has many opportunities. One of the main challenges is to develop a strong leadership. Another challenge is to reach the unchurched people. However, if we have faith and courage, we can overcome these challenges and build a strong and vibrant church.



Reformed Church at Lancaster, Pennsylvania August 31 to September 7. Then on September 14 he will extend fraternal greetings to the General Council of the United Church of Canada. This is Dr. Kozaki's seventh visit to Europe and his eighth to the United States. "It has been my privilege and honor to participate in this great ecumenical work of which the United Church of Christ is a part," said Dr. Kozaki on the eve of his departure, "and I hope this trip will contribute something toward world fellowship of Christian Unity."

### INTERNATIONAL WORK CAMP

Twenty-five young people from abroad are participating in two International Work Camps being conducted in Kumamoto and Osaka this summer by the Youth Department of the National Christian Council. In Osaka a Christian Social Center is being refurbished and extended, a play pool is being constructed, and the walls of the nursery repaired. In Kumamoto on the island of Kyushu the National YMCA Camp site is being improved by the construction of roads, playground and drainage facilities. If the time is opportune the site of a monument to the Kumamoto Bomb will also be prepared. Each work camp is composed of twenty-five to thirty young people, one half of whom are Japanese. Foreign participants this year include ten from Canada, six from the United States, two from the Philippine, one from Hong Kong, four from Okinawa and two from Truk Island. Each camp lasts four weeks. Six hours each day are spent in labor. In the remaining leisure hours, the campers engage in Bible study and discuss mutual problems, assist the local churches, and participate in community activities. In Osaka they are expected to become acquainted with local labor problems. Japanese Christian leaders are both surprised and pleased at the large number of foreign young people who have expressed interest in this program.

### OVERSEAS MISSION DEPARTMENT TO BE ESTABLISHED

The Reverend Gosaku Okada, Vice Moderator of the United Church of Christ in Japan, reports that the executive committee of the church is considering organization of an Overseas Mission Department. The primary purpose of this department will be to minister to the spiritual needs of Japanese scattered throughout the world. There are, for example, 400,000 Japanese living in Brazil who are served by only thirty churches but even so there are not enough ministers. At the time of The Reverend Kentaro Buma's visit there this spring on behalf of Church World Service, the San Paulo Church and others, including churches in Bolivia and Paraguay, asked him to assist them in securing ministers. In Okinawa a community of five thousand Christians are seeking ministers. Consequently it is expected that the General Conference of the United Church will be asked this fall to set up an Overseas Department.

### CHRISTIAN BURIAL GROUNDS

From the earliest days of Protestantism in Japan the question of Christian burial for believers has been a matter of great concern to the church. In general there seem to have been few major





in problems recent years in the large cities but in rural areas insistence on a Christian burial is frequently a cause of misunderstanding. Public burial grounds are still relatively rare so Buddhist temples control most cemeteries. At times, because temples have declined to permit Christian services within their precincts a person will hesitate occasionally to be baptized because he cannot be assured of a proper burial. The Tokyo District of the United Church has been studying this problem for some time and has recently come forward with a concrete proposal for establishing a Christian Cemetery in the suburbs of Tokyo.

### CONFERENCE FOR BLIND

Two training conferences sponsored by the Christian Council for the Blind are to be held in Koganei, a suburb of Tokyo, from July 31 to August 3. For the first three days some thirty blind ministers, evangelists and theological seminary students will discuss their problems and listen to Professor Mitsutaka Suzuki of St. Paul's University speak on the "Central Problems of Modern Theology". Following this, some 150 delegates to a National Conference of Blind Christians from all over the country will assemble under the banner: "We are Disciples of Christ." Dr. Zenta Watanabe, Old Testament scholar and pastor emeritus of the Ginza Church, will speak on the Book of Job and Mr. Masaichi Takemori, professor of Tokyo Theological Seminary on "the Study of the Life of Japan." The program will close with a service in the Ginza Church commemorating publication of the Braille Colloquial Bible.

### BIBLE DISTRIBUTION

During the past seven months, 1,090,343 Bibles or Bible portions were distributed. According to a report of the Japan Bible Society, this is more than 40,000 above the total from the same period last year. The breakdown of the above figure was: 57,036 Bibles, 269,376 New Testaments, 761,517 portions and 2,414 volumes of Braille. The income for the seven months period was ¥75,567,179 or more than \$210,000.

### SELF SUPPORT PROGRAM OF THE UNITED CHURCH

Ever since the resumption of foreign mission relations a decade ago, the United Church of Christ in Japan has been concerned with the question of achieving financial independence. In prewar years the larger denominations - the Church of Christ in Japan, the Methodist Church, and the Kumiai Church - had slowly achieved self-support, but foreign grants for rehabilitation and expansion in post-war years have completely reversed the situation. Therefore, the executive committee of the church has drawn up a plan for presentation to the General Meeting this fall which aims at a gradual return to complete self-support status. In comparison with the total gifts of Japanese Christians, the foreign grant-in-aid is relatively small. But, since this foreign grant goes through the church headquarters, the percent in the headquarters budget is very large. According to the proposed plan, for example, in 1959, the Centennial Year, the total contribution of Japanese will be





¥582,900,000 and the foreign grant will be ¥50,000,000 or about 8% of the grand total. But it will constitute about 50% of the headquarters budget. It is this high percentage which church leaders desire to reduce.

### CHRISTIANITY IN COMMUNIST CHINA

Mrs. Kiyoko Cho, Associate Professor of International Christian University who recently visited the Mainland as a representative of the United Church, reports that religious freedom is respected there as long as the churches do not oppose the government. Christians, she said, are reading the Bible eagerly. The financial situation is favorable. And Christianity is no longer termed a foreign religion since mission relations have been severed. However, because President Mao's picture is seen so frequently in churches and in the Ys, she got the impression that Christians are too prone to emphasize patriotism.

### JAPAN HARVEST JULY ISSUE

The July issue of Japan Harvest, organ magazine of the Evangelical Missionary Association of Japan, is just off the press, and as usual has a number of interesting and informing articles. Since most of the churches with which these missionaries work are relatively new, the problem of self-support and leadership are uppermost. These are discussed in an article which asks: "Are Modified Indigenous Principles Necessary for Japan?". The merits and demerits of the colloquial translation of the Bible are presented in a symposium which asks: "Is the Colloquial Bible Trustworthy?" Included in this is the Reverend W.A. McIlwaine's penetrating discussion of the way in which the future tense is translated and an answer by Mr. Masaru Nagano of the National Institute of Japanese Language. A third article - another symposium - discusses the causes of missionary breakdowns; - a problem which is by no means new in Japan. In 1955 alone thirteen couples are reported to have left Japan for reasons of physical or nervous breakdowns. The annual conference of the Association meets at Karuizawa August 6-12. This will be preceded by a "Convention for the Deepening of the Spiritual Life."

### YMCA SUMMER CAMPS FOR DISABLED

The Kobe YMCA and Japan Church World Service are jointly sponsoring a summer camp on Yoshima Island in the Inland Sea for mentally retarded and physically handicapped children in the Kobe area. Each child will have the personal attention of specialists. A second camp sponsored by the Kyoto YMCA will be conducted on Lake Biwa in Shiga prefecture. Milk, butter and rice will be provided by Japan Church World Service.

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Of five Christian candidates, Junzo Sasamori, well-known layman from Aomori prefecture was the only one who was successful in the recent election for the House of Councillors. Four Buddhist priests, one Tenrikyo layman, an official of Yasukuni Shrine, and three members of the Sokagakkai, a new religious organization of Nichiren Buddhist derivation, were the other successful candidates whose religious position was emphasized.

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The Japanese public and religious leaders in particular are much stirred these days by a controversial prize-winning novel called the "Season of the Sun" and the movie version which has just been released. The story deals with the postwar younger generation's complete disregard for traditional moral standards. Both the YWCA and YMCA leaders have discussed the novel in groups but there is no agreement in their attitudes.

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Mr. Seiji Giga, a director of the Christian Children's Fund, who will represent Japan at the Eighth World Social Welfare Conference in Munich, Germany, August 3-12, recently left for Europe. In connection with his visit there he will inspect social welfare institutions in Europe and return to Japan in October via Canada and the United States.

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The Reverend Isamu Mitsui, whose death was announced in the last issue, conducted a special 9 o'clock evening service at the church every Thursday for workers in neighboring shops. To them he was fondly called Papa-san (Mr. Papa). Prior to his funeral many in the neighborhood went to the church to pray before his casket and the loud music in the streets was subdued in recognition of his death. In spite of heavy rain, more than one thousand persons paid their respect to him at the time of the funeral.

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The Committee on Commemorative Works of the Protestant Centennial Program under the chairmanship of Bishop Tsunenori Takase of the Episcopal Church is considering plans for producing a movie on Protestantism in Japan. The project is being considered by specialists at the AVACO Center.

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The Japan Salvation Army has arranged for 2-3 days retreats this summer at Tsujido Beach for its officers, non-commissioned officers and workers.

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The summer program at the Lake Nojiri YMCA camp site between July 17 and August 26 includes conferences for: leaders, Middle school students, rural students, Junior and Senior high school students, rural women, employed women, University students and those who are at home.

